

HERITAGE COMMISSION

Draft Minutes

February 4, 2010

The Heritage Commission held its regular monthly meeting in the City Council Chambers at 37 Green Street, Concord, New Hampshire, on Thursday, February 4, 2010, at 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Seating of Alternates:

Chairperson Donovan called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

Present at the meeting were Chairperson Donovan, Vice Chairperson Frederick Richards, and members James McConaha, Robert V. Johnson, II, Dr. Bryant Tolles, Carol Durgy Brooks, and Steve Shurtleff. City Planner Douglas Woodward and Administrative Specialist Donna Muir were also present. Absent from the meeting were Committee Members Marilyn Fraser and Elizabeth Durfee Hengen.

Chairperson Donovan elevated the alternate members to full member status for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the January 7, 2010 meeting:

The Commission considered the minutes of the January 7, 2010, Heritage Commission meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Johnson to accept the minutes as presented, and Vice Chairperson Richards seconded the motion. Chairperson Donovan asked if there was any discussion regarding the minutes. The motion accepting the minutes of the January 7, 2010, meeting passed unanimously.

3. New Business:

New Heritage Commission Member:

Chairperson Donovan welcomed Steve Shurtleff back to the Heritage Commission. Mr. Shurtleff is the new City Council representative to the Heritage Commission.

Concord 20/20:

Jeff Taylor, of Jeffrey H. Taylor & Associates, Inc., was introduced to the members of the Heritage Commission. Mr. Taylor is a land use planner hired by Concord 20/20 to work with the City of Concord's boards, staff, and commissions to review land use regulations in Concord, assisting the City to ensure that its current regulations are consistent with the City's Master Plan 2030. Currently, Mr. Taylor is visiting with members of the boards and commissions, as well as City staff, to introduce his project and to obtain their perspectives on the City's regulatory framework. A series of public forums will be planned, in addition to facilitated meetings with the above-mentioned boards, etc. Mr. Taylor stated that the outcome of his work would include two products: (1) agreed upon regulatory changes as suggested by the City boards, commissions, and staff; and, (2) proposed changes to regulations to which the boards, commissions, and staff are unable to agree.

Chairperson Donovan asked whether the Commission members had any comments, questions, or suggestions for Mr. Taylor.

Mr. McConaha stated that the Master Plan 2030 has a Preservation component, in which the section regarding demolition permits appears to create a conflict between preservation goals and demolition permit requirements. Under the current regulations, all utilities must be disconnected from the property prior to the application for a demolition permit. If it is deemed that the property will not be demolished, the utilities would then have to be reconnected.

Chairperson Donovan asked when Mr. Taylor expects the finished product to be completed. Mr. Taylor stated that he would like to have the finished product before City Council prior to the budget hearings, but doesn't think that is likely to happen, so it will be after the budget process concludes in late June.

Mr. Johnson asked how the City Council, boards, commissions, staff, and Concord 20/20 are connected in this process. Mr. Taylor said that the Mayor and City administration saw this collaboration as a way to move forward on this project, without taxing city staff. Mr. Taylor said that he views the City of Concord as his client and Concord 20/20 as the funding source.

Mr. Taylor stated that Mr. Woodward has sent him some ideas from the Planning Board, and he has also received suggestions from the Economic Development Advisory Council (EDAC). In his initial meeting with the Conservation Commission, he was asked if the Commission would be able to obtain copies of what other boards, commission, and staff members have proposed. The Conservation Commission felt that it would allow them to determine whether the Commission would want to support specific proposals or begin a dialogue with other boards regarding those proposals for which they had questions or concerns. Mr. Taylor stated that he would have all the information shared digitally.

Mr. Johnson asked whether Mr. Taylor had any suggestions for the Heritage Commission. Mr. Taylor urged the Commission to look at properties to redevelop and identify appropriate uses for those properties. He said that if the Commission located good properties for redevelopment and identified possible uses for those buildings, the Commission would perhaps be eligible for funds from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Mr. Taylor provided examples of some redeveloped projects he's been involved with, including the Belmont Mill, Belmont, NH; the Eagle Block, Newport, NH; and, the Mountain View House, Whitefield, NH. He also suggested that the Heritage Commission look into a program called Plan NH, which is a group of volunteer professionals who can help with redevelopment projects for a nominal fee.

Chairperson Donovan stated that the Heritage Commission has some work to do regarding this project.

[Mr. Taylor left the meeting at 5:05 p.m.]

4. Old Business:

Certified Local Government Grant:

Mr. Woodward said that the next step in the process for receiving the Certified Local Government Grant (CLG) is to have the funds appropriated by the City Council. The public hearing has been set for February 8, 2010.

He suggested that a representative from the Heritage Commission be in attendance at the hearing, in case the City Council had questions regarding the grant. Mr. McConaha volunteered to attend the City Council hearing.

Mr. Woodward has sent out solicitation letters to preservation consultants listed on the Division of Historic Resources' and the Preservation Alliance's websites, as well as to those consultants who have made proposals for the City's past CLG grants. In the cover letter, Mr. Woodward explained that the funds for the CLG grant still need to be appropriated by City Council, and the Division of Historic Resources still needs to obtain approval from Governor and Council. He also incorporated the request for each consultant to submit insurance certificates and indemnification forms with the proposals.

Proposals are due at the end of February, and a few Heritage Commission members will need to review the proposals prior to the next Heritage Commission meeting on March 4, 2010, in order to make recommendations to the full Commission at their March meeting.

Ms. Hengen had sent an email to Mr. Woodward, who forwarded it to Chairperson Donovan and Vice Chair Richards, stating her intent to submit a proposal for this project. Mr. Woodward had spoken in the past with Douglas Ross, the City's Purchasing Agent, to ascertain whether a member of the Heritage Commission could make a proposal to provide services to the City and the Commission. Mr. Ross' reply was that as long as the consultant selection process was open and competitive, that the member was not involved in that selection process, and that the member was not involved in writing the scope of services, that member could submit a proposal. Mr. Woodward indicated to the Commission that he had noted references in the Commission minutes to statements by Vice Chair Richards relative to his discussions with Ms. Hengen about the CLG grant. Vice Chair Richards stated that he and Ms. Hengen had discussed a number of options for the Heritage Commission to consider when applying for the CLG grant, including a second phase of the Agricultural Survey, the School District Survey, and other items in the City's Master Plan. This was the extent of Ms. Hengen's involvement. Mr. Richards stated that he then discussed this list with other Heritage Commission members and the Division of Historic Resources, both of which liked the School District Survey option, but that Ms. Hengen had no further involvement in the process of choosing the grant project or preparing the scope of services.

Concord School District Consolidation Plan:

At the January 7, 2010, Heritage Commission meeting, the Heritage Commission informally decided that Chairperson Donovan and Mr. McConaha should submit a request to the NH Department of Education to set up a meeting to discuss the Heritage Commission's stance on the Concord School District's Consolidation Plan, particularly as regards the proposed demolition of the Kimball, Conant, and Morrill buildings. Chairperson Donovan sent a letter to the Commissioner of the NH Department of Education requesting a meeting. He also included a copy of the letter that the Heritage Commission submitted to the Concord School Board members. The reply received from the Commissioner was positive and a meeting is to be scheduled.

5. Miscellany:

Kimball-Jenkins Estate:

Chairperson Donovan stated that he, Ms. Hengen, and Mr. McConaha attended a two-hour public forum at the Kimball-Jenkins Estate. The new trustees of the Estate have turned to the community to gather ideas for

options for the Kimball-Jenkins Estate. Chairperson Donovan said that there was a wide array of suggestions offered during the public forum. The trustees will host a follow-up forum in the future.

Gas House Building:

Mr. McConaha said that he has noticed that the side door has been open and the lights have been on at the Gas House Building in the south end of Concord. Recently, the doors have been painted and the building has been secured. Mr. Woodward said he had not heard of anything being done at the Gas House Building, but that he knew the gas company had talked with City officials a while back. Another party was interested in purchasing the building, but there were many concerns with sludge, and hazardous waste, and the gas company did not consider the building to be useable.

Mr. McConaha suggested that if the City owned the property, they could request proposals for redevelopment. He feels that the building would make a nice historical park. Mr. Woodward stated that the gas company has been very negative about what could be done with the building because of contamination in and around the site. He said that the gas company has been mitigating the contamination for a long time, and while the building is a liability to the gas company, they are still paying taxes on the building. Mr. McConaha stated that this property is one of the only intact gas houses in the country.

There being no further business or discussion, a motion was made by Vice Chair Richards and seconded by Carol Durgy Brooks to adjourn the meeting. The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

A TRUE RECORD ATTEST:

Donna Muir
Administrative Specialist
Planning Division